

AMERICAN SCHOOLS OF ORIENTAL RESEARCH  
Jerusalem and Baghdad  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL NEWSLETTER

Confidential\* \* \* \* \* Not for Publication

Newsletter #9

1959-1960

Jerusalem, May 10, 1960.

Five members of the Jerusalem School--John Marks, Father Hartman, Herbert Bess, Willard Oxtoby, and Layla Oxtoby--spent the first twelve days of March on a tour in Iran. Our Annual Professor, Father Louis F. Hartman, gives the following account of this Persian Safari:

"We had hoped to make the whole journey in John Marks' car, but, after driving to Damascus we found it necessary to leave the car in this city and make the rest of the safari by plane and hired car. The idea of driving north through Syria and then north and east through Turkey into Iran was considered but given up as unfeasible. It would have been too long a way to traverse both in going and returning, and the high mountain passes in northeastern Turkey might still be afflicted with late winter blizzards. Besides, though no visa was required for Turkey, everything east of the upper Euphrates is in a military zone in that country and an auto cannot leave the main roads to visit Hittite or other ancient sites without a special permit.

"The first long jump by air over Iraq directly into Iran got off to a bad start. The S.A.S. Caravelle jet plane which we were to take shortly after midnight from Damascus to Abadan, on coming in from Europe could not land at the Damascus airport on account of strong cross winds and had to make an unscheduled stop instead at Beirut. Out at the Damascus airport at midnight, therefore, our group and a few other passengers were told that we would be taken by taxi to the Beirut airport--a rather strange hour to cross over the Hermon and Lebanon mountain ranges on a two hour drive, that was made even more exciting by the loss of headlights shortly out of Damascus in one of the two cars in the caravan.

We found Abadan an odd combination of rather primitive native quarters and luxurious homes of wealthy oil men, set in the midst of palm groves and oil refineries. But it served as a convenient point of departure for a drive to Susa north over the Alluvial plane of Susiana. Even though most of the treasures of this renowned capital of ancient Elam are now elsewhere in museums, a visit to its immense tell, now dominated by the modern castle of the French excavators, is well worth the long drive from Abadan. On a plane of Iran Air (also used for other local flights in Persia) the group then flew to Shiraz in the region of ancient Parsua. While this charming city of the Persian poets Hafiz and Sa'adi is interesting enough in itself, in the present case its main value lay in its proximity by car to Persepolis and Pasargadae. The splendor of the Achaemenian palaces at Persepolis must actually be seen to be fully appreciated. The next short flight was to Isfahan, famous for its magnificent mosques and lovely hand-loomed carpets. Another similar trip by air took the group to Tehran, the bustling capital of modern Iran at the foot of the snow-peaked Elburz Mountains, with its Archaeological Museum one of the finest in the Middle East. A three-day auto trip from Tehran to Herat and Kandahar and return, with a visit to Bisutun

on the way, was arranged for, but it was cancelled at the last minute as too exhausting and too expensive. A Pan-Am plane finally took the group from Tehran directly back to Damascus. Similar safaris to Iran can be heartily recommended to future residents at the Jerusalem School. Though rather costly as carried out this time, a tour of Western Iran is well worth the expense to every student of the ancient Middle East. A gratis visa is easily obtainable at Amman, and the Persians are most friendly hosts to Americans."

On April 7 the Director, accompanied by Prof. and Mrs. Massey H. Shepherd of the Church Divinity School of the Pacific and Emile Abu Dayeh of Jerusalem set out for Beirut in the School's carryall to meet the S/S Exeter bringing Prof. and Mrs. James L. Kelso of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary with a consignment of archeological equipment and a new stove and ice-cream freezer. The Shepherds stayed over in Damascus for a few days. Emile and I met the Kelso's at the dock and after some consultation it was decided that he would bring the Kelso's back by taxi and I would stay over to arrange for the goods to be shipped by rail and to visit Khirbet Afqa. I stayed at the home of Prof. H. Kalayan of the AUB School of Engineering who is in charge of the extensive restoration work being carried on by the Lebanese Dept. of Antiquities at Baalbek and elsewhere. Prof. Kalayan had been our guide in the Fall trip to Lebanon (see newsletter No. 5). On Friday, April 8, we visited Deir el Qala'ah and the shrine of Baal Marqod (Baal of the Dance) overlooking Beirut. Nearby a Christian Church with an interesting mosaic floor is being restored under Prof. Kalayan's supervision. On Saturday morning we visited the Museum at AUB and I met and talked with Prof. Dimitri Baramki whom I had last seen when he was excavating at Khirbet Mafjar in 1945.

On Sunday Prof. and Mrs. Kalayan drove me up the valley of the Nahr Ibrahim, River of Adonis, to Mugharat Afqa. The river was running red as with the blood of Nu'man and the red anemones (shaqa'iq al-Nu'man, the flower stained with the blood of Adonis) were in full bloom all along the valley. The tops of the highest mountains on either side of the valley were streaked with snow. The river gushed from the mouth of the cave with the noise of many waters and fell in a series of foaming cascades down into the valley. From the towering amphitheatre of cliffs flanking the cave other small waterfalls came tumbling to join the rushing river. Down the mountains on either side of the valley streamed white threads of foaming water. It would be hard to find a more likely spot for terrestrial localization of the mythological concept of the mingling of the rivers or the confluence of the subterranean seas. In any case, it is certainly one of the most beautiful spots on earth. Below the falls on the south side of the river bed lie the ruins of the temple of Venus-Aphrodite-Astarte destroyed by Constantine because of the scandalous fertility rites which persisted there. The Lady of Afoa is still venerated by both Christian and Moslem locals, and rags are hung on the tree branches which grow out of the ruins and lighted lamps are placed in an alcove below the trees. There is some interesting folklore to be collected from the natives of the region and I hope to return for this purpose. The Lebanese Department of Antiquities plans to do some archeological work here and at El-Yammuneh on the other

side of Jebel Muneitra this summer.

I hated to miss the Samaritan Passover, but felt that the trip to Afqa was of much greater value to me. Prof. H. G. May led the School visit to Mt. Gerizim and furnished the following account:

"On April 9th a "caravan" of two cars with eleven people from the School started after an early breakfast for a trip northwards, which included a visit to Jacob's Well at the foot of Mt. Gerizim, Tell Balata (Shechem), and Tell Dothan where Dr. Joseph Free of Wheaton College had started this year's excavations. The party ate a late lunch in the expedition house in Dothan and enjoyed and profited from a detailed and thorough survey of the excavations under the guidance of Dr. and Mrs. Free. The Plain of Dothan was lush and green with its wheat fields waving in the cool breezes of the afternoon. The poppies and the last blooms of the anemones were in evidence. We returned southward to reach the summit of Mt. Gerizim shortly before sunset, where the tourists who had come to witness the Samaritan passover were chilled by the winds from across the Mediterranean, which could be seen in the haze in the western horizon, glimmering faintly in the rays of the setting sun. The Samaritan passover has often been described in these letters and does not need repeating. Our sympathies were with the lambs grazing innocently beside the priests at prayer. The bloody climax of the slaughter of the lambs is a spectacle one may well eschew. The preservation of rites of a distant past appeared to us of dubious merit. It all seemed remote from the pressing problems here and now. Without waiting for the cooking and eating of the paschal meal, we descended the mountain and in the darkness returned to Jerusalem and our home at the School."

Easter celebrations in Jerusalem are always the highlight of the year. This year the Eastern and Western Easters coincided and it was physically impossible for any one person to take in all the various observances. On Palm Sunday the several communions held their masses, processions, and devotional walks from Bethany and Bethphage, via the Mount of Olives to Gethsemane. Maundy Thursday was footwashing day for the Greek, Latins, Armenians, Copts, and Syrians. The jeweled crowns of the patriarchs and bishops, the richly brocaded robes, were removed for the brief moment of mock humility. Good Friday was marked by burial processions led by the heads of the various communities. The Greek and Latin Patriarchs conducted the processions of their respective communities and similar rites were observed by Armenian, Copts, and Assyrians. Hundreds of American and European Christians joined with Jordanians and Christians from other Arab countries. The highlight of Holy Saturday was the ceremony of the Sacred Fire which for Eastern Christians marks the beginning of Easter and symbolizes Christ issuing from the Tomb as the Light of the World. The cry al-Masih Qam, "Christ Is Risen", reverberates through the dome of the Holy Sepulchre, and the head of the Orthodox community (this time Archbishop Athenagoras substituted for the ailing Patriarch Benediktos) emerges from the Tomb with a blazing torch, believed by some to be miraculously kindled from heaven. The scene that follows defies description. Runners representing the orthodox



communities race to carry the flame to the pinnacle of the dome. Within a matter of seconds the flame is passed to thousands of tapers and afterward transmitted to Christian villages and homes all over Jordan. Couriers also take the flame across no-man's land (by special arrangements of the U.N.) to light candles and lamps in Christian churches on the other side of the armistice line. Greek and Egyptian Christians carry the flame home to Athens, Alexandria, and Cairo. The fervor of the people is awe-inspiring, or some may say terrifying. The student of history of religion will recall other fire ceremonies and reflect on the deep seated and persistent tendency to pyrolatry in the human make-up. A statistical note: the Tourist Bureau reported a few days ago that almost 20,000 tourists had visited Jordan in the last three weeks and more are coming and going daily by the hundreds.

Prof. John M. Allegro of the University of Manchester has been much in the news of late because of his search for the 200 odd tons of gold and silver (give or take a few tons) listed in the Copper Scroll. He had a crew digging around the tombs of Absalom and Zechariah in the Qidron Valley and some holes were sunk at Qumran itself. Prof. Robert De Langhe of the University of Louvain assisted Prof. Allegro in explorations in the area of Khirbet Mird where a Belgian expedition had operated in 1953. There were newspaper reports that Prof. Allegro was to make some explorations in the area of the Dome of the Rock, but the Governor of Jerusalem announced that no operations had been or would be carried out there. Allegro and his party have recently departed from Jordan.

For some weeks the Jordanian newspapers have been reporting the activities of Ralph E. Baney, Executive Director of the Holy Land Christian Approach Mission, an orphanage in Bethlehem. Mr. Baney headed a team of underwater explorers consisting of himself, Mr. and Mrs. Dean Ryther, and Viola Conway, all from Kansas City. The reported purpose of the expedition was to find the lost cities of Sodom and Gomorrah beneath the Dead Sea. The expedition was said to be equipped with 60 pieces of diving equipment and underwater photography apparatus specially made in France to withstand the high salt content of the Dead Sea. The report was that the expedition would concentrate in the Qumran area for about two months and then switch to the Lidan where Melvin Rizzie, of the U.S. technical aid mission in Amman and Allen Vincent-Barwood, Assistant Professor of Education at AUB, did some underwater exploring last January. Mr. Baney departed from Jordan at the end of April after reporting his results to the Department of Antiquities. According to the Jerusalem Times, the Acting Director of Antiquities, Mr. Dia ed-Din Rifa'i told newsmen that "Baney had failed completely in his mission and that his activities were founded on guesswork and hope." Baney announced that because of the density of the Dead Sea waters he could not take photographs.

Recent and current guests at the School include: Mrs. Margueritte Harmon Bro; Dean Stanley Frost of McGill University Faculty of Theology; Dean Felix B. Gear of Columbia Theological Seminary; Prof. James A. Phillips of Duke University; Prof. and Mrs. William S. McCullough of the University of Toronto; Prof. and Mrs. James L. Kelso of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary; Prof. Bent Noack of the University

of Copenhagen; Prof. J. Daniel Joyce, Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis; Mr. David Bickmore, cartographer of Oxford Press; Rev. Charles A. Kennedy, graduate student at Yale University, preparing a doctoral dissertation on the Whiting Collection of pottery at the Yale Art Gallery; Mr. Louis Feldman, National Commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Mrs. Feldman; Admiral Leland P. Lovette; William D. Vaughn, photographer for National Geographic; the Rev. Clifford Smith, Pittsburgh; the Rev. William A. Young and Mrs. Young and Herb, Highland Park, Ill.; Mr. Henschel Price, Huntington, W. Va.; Mr. James Swauger, Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh; Dr. and Mrs. William Keith, Kalamazoo, Michigan. Among distinguished visitors at the School were Prof. Joachim Jeremias of Göttingen and Prof. and Mrs. Martin Noth of Bonn.

The coming and going at the School increases in tempo. The Marks family left in early April and the H. G. Mays and Mrs. Bro departed recently. Will and Layla Oxtoby are leaving this weekend in order to be at home for their firstborn. Will has accepted a position as lecturer at McGill University. Prof. Kelso is busy in preparation for his dig at Bethel to begin late this month. We are looking forward to the arrival of the directors and staffs of three expeditions to work out of the School this summer.

Marvin H. Pope, Director  
Jerusalem School